

Twist & Shout! Communicative Activities and Technology for Elementary Students

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Communicative Activities

1. Switch/Cambia

Students stand in a circle. Each round, one student is “the question asker.” They create a question or select a question from a selection of teacher-generated questions. The question asker says the question aloud to the class and then leaves the room. Another student volunteers to be the “switch person.” This student answers the question quietly to model an appropriate answer. The question asker returns to the circle and stands in the middle. This student asks the question to another classmate, who responds to the question. This process continues until the “question asker” asks the question to the “switch person.” At this point, the “switch person” does not respond to the question but rather responds, “Switch!” All of the students switch spots in the circle. The last person standing in the circle without a spot is now the “question asker” and the process begins again.

1.1. Seated Switch/Cambia

An alternative to standing is to use chairs and have one less chair than student in the class.

2. Concentric Circle

This is a common activity in language classrooms. Students form two circles: a smaller, inner circle surrounded by a larger, outer circle. Students from the inner circle face those in the outer circle. Each student from the inner circle is paired with one student from the outer circle. Partners speak to each other about a specific topic or question. For example, while learning about dates and ages students can ask each other how old they are and when their birthday is. During Hispanic Heritage month, students can learn the flags of Spanish-speaking countries and practice explaining where they are from. Each student has a flag of a Spanish-speaking country. The students ask each other, “Where are you from?” and their answer is based on the flag they are holding. When students finish speaking, they sit on the ground. Once all students are seated, the teacher knows everyone has finished and says, “Switch.” The inner circle rotates one person to the left and students begin the conversation with their new partner. It is often helpful to write the important questions on the whiteboard for students to refer to while speaking. Depending on the level of the students, the important questions and answers or key vocabulary should be reviewed prior to the activity. This information can be written on the whiteboard and erased slowly as students speak with more classmates. As demonstrated below.

2.1. Caterpillar

This alternative to the *Concentric Circle* is ideal for smaller class sizes. Students form two lines facing one another. Students partner with the person in the other line who is standing in front of them. Students speak to each other about a specific topic or question. When students finish speaking, they sit on the ground. Once all students are seated, the teacher knows everyone has finished and says, “Switch.” Students in one line stand up and move one person to the left. Students in the other line stand up but do not move. Students begin the conversation with a new partner.

2.2. Music Mingle

A less structured alternative to the concentric circle is the “Music Mingle.” The teacher plays part of a song and while the song is playing, students dance and sing around the room. When the music stops, the students stop and talk with someone near them. When students finish speaking, they sit on the ground. Once all students are seated, the teacher knows everyone has finished and plays the music to start the process over again.

Persona A	Persona B
Hola.	Buenos días.
¿Cómo te llamas?	Me llamo ____.
¿Cómo estás?	Estoy ____ / Tengo ____.
¿De dónde eres?	Soy de ____.
Adiós.	Hasta luego.

3. Human Billboard

Each student creates a “billboard” by drawing pictures that represents him/her. No words can be written. Students then share their billboards with their classmates. Students ask each other questions to figure out the meaning of the picture and how it represents the individual. For lower level students, yes/no questions are most realistic. For higher level students, they should ask more complex questions and/or explain the significance of each picture in detail. This is a great getting-to-know you activity for the beginning of the school year and to practice expressing likes and dislikes.

4. Logical/Illogical


Students work in pairs for this activity. Student A is given the first half of a sentence. Student B is given the second half of the sentence. Each student has to read his/her portion of the sentence aloud. Students cannot look at each other's papers. Together the students determine if the sentence is logical or illogical. An example is provided below.

Estudiante A	
	¿Cierto o falso?
1. <i>Una casa grande</i>	C F
2. en el baño.	C F
3. <i>Hay una cama</i>	C F

Estudiante B	
	¿Cierto o falso?
1. tiene dos cuartos.	C F
2. <i>Hay un coche</i>	C F
3. en el dormitorio.	C F

5. I Have...Who Has?

Students are each given an index card. The index card has a sentence written at the top and a question written at the bottom. One index card has a star on it to indicate that this is the first question. The student with the star reads the question aloud to the class. The other students must determine if the sentence written on top of their card is the appropriate response. The student whose card is the appropriate response stands next to the first person. Then he/she reads the question at the bottom of his/her card. The process continues until all of the students are standing in a circle. The last student reads his/her question and the person who started should have the matching response.

Tengo la clase de español los lunes, jueves y viernes.
 ¿Quién es la profesora de español?

Sra. Cochran es la maestra de español.
¿Qué haces durante la clase de educación física?

6. Sandra's Squares

This teacher-made puzzle is a good way to practice vocabulary and conjugations. The teacher creates a “puzzle” that students have to put together. To make the puzzle easier write single words rather than sentences. Add more squares to make the puzzle more challenging. Writing vocabulary on the outer edges of the puzzle makes it even more challenging. Students can glue the pieces onto construction paper. Below is a sample puzzle.

Yo comer la cena.	Nosotros vivimos en una casa.	Tú beber agua.	Yo viajo a España.	Él hablar español.
Yo como la cena.	Yo abro la puerta.	Tú bebes agua.	María tocar el piano.	Él habla español.
Ella correr rápido.	Nosotros bailar tango.	Los chicos sacar fotos.		
Ella corre rápido.	Nosotros bailamos tango.	Los chicos sacan fotos.		

7. Beanbag Toss

This fast-paced game is a good activity to review vocabulary and/or language structures. Create a PowerPoint/Prezzi/Google Presentation that has a picture in the center of a slide and two words or sentences below. One of the words accurately identifies the image, the other word does not. Two chairs are placed under the screen; one chair below each word. The class is divided into two teams. The teams stand in line facing the screen. The first student for each team tosses the beanbag onto the chair below the appropriate word. Students have to say the word aloud or use it in a sentence. For example, if students are learning to express likes and dislikes and the picture is chocolate, the student could say, “I like chocolate.” The beanbag is given to the next student in line for each team and the process continues with new pictures.

8. Right Chair, Wrong Chair

The class is divided into two teams and stands in two lines. At the front of the room are four chairs. There are two chairs to the left, which are the “wrong chairs.” A few feet separate the “wrong chairs” from the two “right chairs.” The teacher reads a sentence aloud such as, “I color with scissors.” The first student in line for each team decides if this sentence is “right or wrong” and sits in the appropriate chair. For this sample question, the students would sit in the “wrong chair.” The students then need to correct the mistake aloud. The sentences can be content-based as in the example above, or grammar-based such as, “I is at school.” To make this a no-preparation activity and increase student involvement, ask each student to generate the sentences. Each student writes one correct statement and one incorrect statement. It is beneficial to have students draw a smiley face next to the correct sentence and a sad face next to the incorrect sentence. This allows the teacher to understand mistakes that students are making in their “correct” statements.

9. Hedbanz

This is a fun question game for all ages! Students wear a picture card on their “headband” and ask questions to figure out what they are. Teachers can use the pictures provided in the game or create their own to reflect vocabulary learned. Teacher’s Discovery sells a similar game entitled, “What’s on my head?” that uses sunglasses rather than headbands. Possible topics include animals, foods, famous Hispanic Americans, and daily activities.



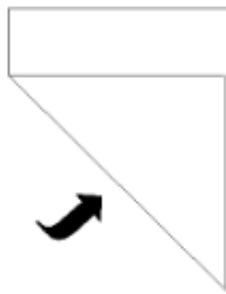
10. Cootie-Catchers

The teacher gives instructions on how to make a cootie catcher aloud. The teacher explains what students should write on each flap. For example, the most outer flaps have numbers while the inner tabs have key vocabulary that is being studied (food, clothing, countries, colors, adjectives, school supplies, etc.). The hidden tabs have key questions related to the topic being studied: “What time do you eat breakfast?”; “When do you use an umbrella?”; “What is the capital of Ecuador?”; “What color is your hair?”; “Who is your science teacher?”. After students make the cootie-catcher, they share them with their classmates! Student A holds out his/her cootie-catcher and Student B chooses a number. Student A moves the cootie-catcher in and out as they counts aloud to the number selected by Student B. Student B then selects a word from the inner tab. Student A moves the cootie-catcher in and out as they spell the word aloud. Student B chooses a word from the inner tab. Student A lifts the tab and reads the question underneath it aloud. Student B responds to the question. This is a great way for students to practice interrogatives, essential phrases, counting, and spelling. This is also a good review activity before assessments.

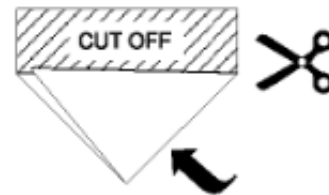
Instructions for “Cootie Catcher” and “Fortune Teller” www.funorama.com



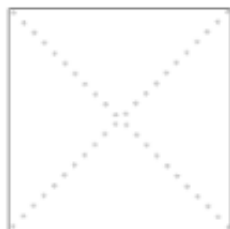
Take an 8 ½" x 11
sheet of paper



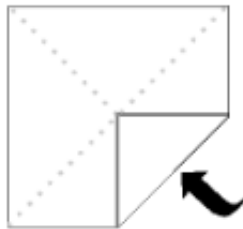
Fold corner up till it meets
the other side



Fold other corner up till it
meets the other side—then
cut off the rectangle at the top.



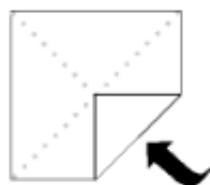
Unfold it and place it
printed side down — you
should now have an
8 ½" x 8 ½" piece.



Fold up all four corners
so that the points meet
in the middle.



It should now look like this.
Flip it over.



Fold up all four corners
so that the points meet
in the middle.



It should now
look like this.



Now fold the
top back.



Work your fingers into
the four corners from the
fold side — work the
creases to form the
four points.

11. Yellow Brick Road

Laminate pictures of key vocabulary on yellow paper. After reviewing the vocabulary with students, place the pictures on the floor as a "Yellow Brick Road." As students walk down the Yellow Brick Road, they identify the picture aloud. When learning about animals, students can say whether or not they have the animal as a pet. Other variations for more advanced students include: saying whether or not they like the object, how frequently they perform the activity, describing the color of the object, etc. Students can walk the Yellow Brick Road alone or in pairs. If a student cannot recall a word, he/she can ask the student in front or behind of him/her for assistance. This is a great transitional activity if students are moving from one place in the classroom to another. It is especially effective when moving from a group activity to seat work.

12. Dictation

There are many varieties of dictation exercises. The teacher can spell a word and the students write the word. Another variation is for students to have a paper with the months of the year written in bubble letters. The teacher gives instructions to color each month a different color such as, "Color February pink. Color October orange." When learning about weather, students can draw the weather in various parts of Spain or another country. The teacher says, "It is sunny in the north of Spain. It is raining in the south of Spain." and students draw the weather accordingly.

12.1. Running Dictation

This is a good exercise for more advanced students. The teacher posts a brightly colored piece of paper at the back of the room. A short paragraph or dialogue is written on the paper. Students work in pairs to copy the paragraph exactly as it is written on the colored paper onto their own paper. One student is the writer and the other student is the speaker. The speaker walks to the colored paper and memorizes as much as possible. The speaker then returns to his/her partner, the writer, and repeats what he/she memorized. The writer writes this information. The speaker can go back and forth between the colored paper and the writer as much as needed until the entire paragraph is written on the students' paper. The writer can ask questions to the speaker to clarify. For more advanced students, parts of the dialogue can be left blank. After the students correctly copy the dialogue, they work together to fill-in the blanks.

13. Jeopardy

13.1. Individuals

Each student writes the answer on a small whiteboard and keeps score for himself/herself.

13.2. Teams with Gatekeepers

Divide the class into two to four teams, depending on class size. Each student has a white board, marker and eraser. Students on each team are assigned a number. Student #1 from each team comes to the front of the room. These students are the "gatekeepers". A category and question is chosen and everyone writes the answer, but the first student "gatekeeper" to correctly write the answer wins the points. The team earns more points for every individual on his/her team that correctly wrote the answer. Student #2 from each team comes to the front of the room. These students are now the "gatekeepers" and the process continues.

14. Charades

14.1. Traditional

One student acts out the phrase or word and the other students have to guess what they are acting out. The first student to correctly identify the phrase or word becomes the next actor.

14.2. Reverse

An alternative activity has the class acting out the phrase while one student works to guess the phrase or word.

14.3. Partners

Students work with a partner to act out and guess the phrases. Each pair is given an envelope with all of the phrases written on slips of paper. One student is the actor and the other student is the guesser. As soon as the guesser correctly identifies the phrase aloud, the actor selects another phrase and acts. The actor has the option to pass. The actor acts out as many phrases as possible within one minute. Then students switch roles, but do not put the paper slips back in the envelope. Continue the process until students have gone through all of the phrases.

14.4. Show Me

"Show me" charades in which the teacher tells students to act out phrases or words is a fun and quick way to review or practice new material. It can be as simple as, "Show me: I am happy."; "Show me: I am sad." Or it can be more advanced such as "Show me: I write with a pencil."; "Show me: I read an interesting book."

14.5. Line race

The class is divided into two to four teams. The teams stand in a line facing the teacher. The teacher holds a card with the phrase written on it or says the phrase aloud. The first students in line for each team have to act out the word and say it aloud. The first student to do this correctly receives a point for their team. The first students in line for each team go to the back of the line. The second student in line for each team continues the process. This should be a fast-paced activity.

15. Around the World

The teacher writes questions on a colored piece of paper. These papers are places around the classroom. Students work in pairs and go around the room answering each question. This is a great way to turn a routine book exercises into a lively partner activity.

16. Signature Activities

Students interview each other about a specific topic or ask a key question. After writing his/her partner's response, the partner signs the paper. Key questions could be: "When is your birthday?"; "What is your favorite book and why?"; "How many siblings do you have and what are their names?". This is a good way to review basic conversations, as well. Students first ask basic questions and then ask the key question. Students only write his/her partner's answer to the key response. (It is often helpful to write the important questions on the whiteboard for students to refer to while speaking. Depending on the level of the students, the important questions and answers or key vocabulary should be reviewed prior to the activity. This information can be written on the whiteboard and erased slowly as students speak with more classmates. As demonstrated below. This activity also works well in combination with the Concentric Circle, Caterpillar, and Music Mingle.

Review of questions & answers to be written on the board:

Persona A	Persona B
Hola.	Buenos días.
¿Cómo te llamas?	Me llamo _____.
¿Cómo estás?	Estoy _____. / Tengo _____.
¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños?	Mi cumpleaños es _____.
Adiós.	Hasta luego.

Sample handout for students to complete during the conversation:

Nombre	Cumpleaños

16.1. Find Someone Who...

Students must find individuals who have certain characteristics or likes and ask each one to sign his/her name next to the characteristic. Sample topics: physical traits (height, hair color, etc.), number of siblings, birthday month, or career aspirations.

17. Walk the Line

The teacher places a piece of masking or painting tape across the classroom. (Painting tape is much easier to remove from carpet than masking tape.) The line of tape should be long enough so that all students can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with a foot or two on each end. The far left side of the tape is "I love..." the middle is "I like..." and the far right side is "I strongly dislike..." (For more advanced students, there can be more points on the line to express likes and dislikes.) The teacher makes an opinion statement such as "I love to dance and sing" or shows a picture of people dancing and singing. Students have to decide how much they enjoy or dislike the activity and stand in the appropriate spot on the tape line. The teacher then asks a few students, "How much do you like dancing and singing?" For more advanced students, the teacher can ask them to explain why they like or dislike the activity. Food is another great topic for this activity! Another variation is to use adverbs of frequency (always, often, occasionally, never, etc.) as points on the line and use phrases such as "I go to school," "I ride a bike," or "I use a computer."

17.1. Four Corners

Rather than having a gradient of responses, four corners allows for only four specific responses. These responses (I love, I like, I don't like, I strongly dislike) are posted in the four corners of the classroom. Students move to the corners of the room in response to the posed scenario.

17.2. Jump the Line

The teacher places a piece of masking or painting tape across the classroom. The line of tape should be long enough so that all students can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with a foot or two on each end. The teacher makes a statement such as, "I paint and draw in art class" or "The capital of Mexico is Mexico City." If the statement is true, students jump in front of the tape and say "Yes/True." If the statement is false, students jump behind the line and say, "No/False." A student corrects the false statement aloud.

18. Number Line: Where is the snowman?

Students work in pairs. They each are given a number line. The length of the number line can vary depending on the level of the students. Student A circles a number to indicate where his/her snowman is located. Student B has to ask questions to figure out where the snowman is hiding, so Student B could ask, "Is the snowman at 10?" Student A responds, "higher" or "lower." This process continues until Student B finds the snowman. Then students switch roles. (Rather than making multiple copies, put paper in a sheet protector. Students use a dry erase marker and Kleenex to play over and over again.)

19. Card Math

Students play this game in pairs. Each pair of students is given a deck of cards without face cards. Students sit next to each other, not across from one another. Students divide the deck of cards evenly. They do not look at their cards. Students count "1, 2, 3 flip!" and each student flips over a card. For beginner students, the objective is to add the two cards together. The first student to say the correct number aloud gets the two cards. (Ace cards are #1). The process continues until they go through all of the cards.

19.1. Multiplication

For more advanced students, the cards can be multiplied together.

19.2. Double Digits

Rather than adding or multiplying the two cards, the two cards become a double digit number. For example, if the two cards are "seven" and "two" the first student to say "seventy-two" wins. For this variation, students need to be able to count over 100 because if a "three" card and a "ten" card are flipped, the students must say "three hundred and ten."

20. Alien Monster Drawing

Working in pairs, each student writes five numbers between one and ten. Student partners then exchange papers. The teacher then explains how these numbers correlate to the number of body parts on a very funny alien. (Get ready for giggles!) The first number is the number of heads; the second, eyes; the third, ears; the fourth, nose; the fifth, mouths; etc. The second student draws the alien according to the numbers his/her partner wrote.

On the Fly & No Preparation Activities

1. Sparkle/Penguin

This is a good game to practice vocabulary that has a sequence such as numbers, days, months, vowels, alphabet, planets, etc.) Students stand in a line or circle. The teacher begins by announcing the topic, such as counting by 5's to 50. One student starts by saying the first word in the sequence ("zero"). The student to his/her left says the next word in the sequence and this continues until a student says the last word in the sequence ("fifty"). The next student says "Sparkle/Penguin!" and the student immediately to his/her left sits down and is out of the game. Young students enjoying becoming a penguin when they are out of the game.

2. The Big Wind Blows

Students stand in a circle or are seated in chairs in a circle. (If using chairs, there should be one less chair than people.) One student stands in the middle of the circle and says a true statement about himself/herself. Anyone who shares this characteristic, including the speaker in the middle, stands and finds a new seat. The last student standing without a seat is now the speaker. The process continues. This is a good getting-to-know-you activity for the beginning of the year or when practicing likes/dislikes.

3. Two Truths & a Lie

Each student writes two true statements and one false statement on a piece of paper. In small groups or as a class, students read their three statements. The other students must guess which statement is the lie.

3.1. Guess Who: Three Facts

Each student writes three to five true statements about himself/herself. In small groups or as a class, the papers are collected and shuffled. One student selects a paper and reads the statements aloud. All of the students have to guess who wrote those statements.

4. Important Numbers

Each student writes three to five numbers that reflect something about himself/herself. For example: 3 represents my birth month (March), 8 represents my shoe size, 2 represents the number of siblings I have, 21 represents the number of my favorite baseball player, Roberto Clemente, 7 represents my lucky number, etc. Students only write the number, not the significance. In partners or small groups, one student says his/her numbers. The other students guess the meaning of the numbers and/or ask questions to guess the meaning. The student presenting can give clues.

5. Number Circle

Students stand in a circle. Students need to count as a class. In no particular order, students take turns stepping into the circle and say the next number in the sequence. If more than one student steps forward at the same time, the class has to start over, but they can use the same order.

6. Stand in Order

Students have to line up in order from oldest to youngest, tallest to shortest, etc.

7. Hangman

A good way to practice vocabulary, phrases, and the alphabet is to play hangman. After playing a few rounds as a class to model the activity and language, students can play in small groups or partners. In groups and partners, students take turns being the leader and generating the word or phrase.

7.1. Snowman

Snowman has the same objective and rules but a snowman is drawn as students incorrectly guess letters. For the first incorrect answer, the leader draws the lower, bigger circle of the snowman's body. For the second incorrect answer, the leader draws the middle, medium circle of the snowman's body. For the third incorrect answer, the leader draws the top, smaller circle of the body. With each incorrect answer another element can be added (eyes, nose, mouth, arms, hat, and scarf). The snowman is complete once the scarf is drawn.

8. I Spy with My Little Eye

Play "I Spy with My Little Eye" as a whole class, small groups, or in partners. Students can spy objects by describing the size, shape, and color ("I spy something big, rectangular, and white." A whiteboard.) Classroom materials can also be explained by what they are used for ("I spy something with which I write." A pencil.)

8.1. Make Your Own Board!

Make your own Eye Spy board! Collect various objects, place them together, take a picture, make copies of the picture, and voila! Another alternative is to use pictures already posted on Google.

8.2. Teacher's Discovery boards

Teacher's Discover sells laminated boards for Eye Spy. They come in sets of 30 about various topics including body parts and clothing, food, shapes and numbers, colors and animals, and classroom nouns and adjectives.

9. Simon Says

The teacher is "Simon" and instructs students to do various activities. For example, when practicing food and prepositions, students can each have a piece of plastic food or a picture of a taco. The teacher makes statements like, "Simon says, put the taco on your head. Put the taco underneath your desk." If students place the taco in the incorrect place, they are out. If students do something without "Simon" instructing them to do so, they are also out. More advanced students can take turns being Simon.

10. Where's the Ball?

The teacher hides an item in the classroom and students have to find it. Once they find the item they must describe where the item is located by using prepositions. The first student to do this correctly now hides the item.

10.1. Scavenger Hunt

The teacher hides various items around the classroom. Students have a list of these items and have to find where they are hiding in the classroom. As students find each object, they write or say the location using prepositions.

10.2. Where's Waldo?

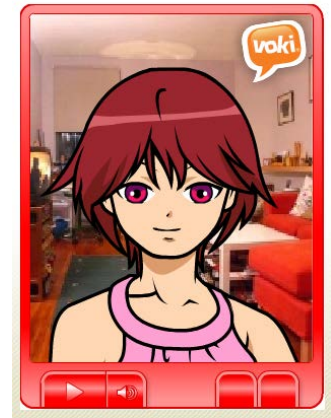
Students play *Where's Waldo?* in partners. When the students find Waldo, they say or write where he is by using prepositions.

Technology Resources & Activities

1. Voki

<http://www.voki.com/>

Students create talking avatars called voki. Sample assignments include: "Who are you? (name, age, birthday, etc.)"; "What do you like to do in your free time?"; "Describe a typical day or week"; "Describe a favorite vacation." Students can create an avatar that is representative of himself/herself or be creative and invent characters. After students create their vokis, they can share them with the class as a whole, in small groups, or individually. After viewing the vokis, students can write a few things they learned about their classmates. This last step could be used as an exit ticket. Voki.com is free but Voki Classroom costs about \$30/year. Voki Classroom allows teachers to create classes and assignments and monitor projects at all stages. It also gives students access to their peers' completed projects. Other benefits to Voki Classroom include individual username and passwords for each student and increased privacy for projects that include personal information. Vokis are embeddable to most sites.



2. Google Voice

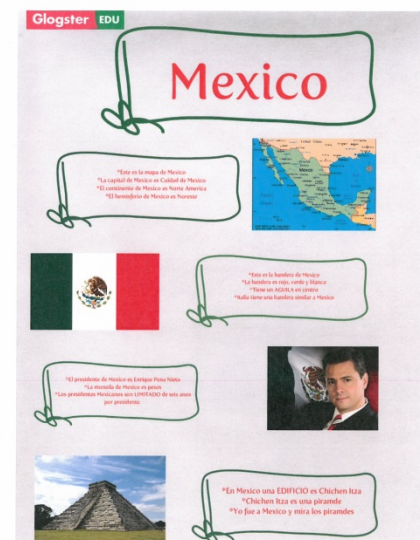
<https://www.google.com/voice>

Teachers create a Google Voice account and phone number. (You need a Gmail account to sign up for Google Voice.) Students call that phone number and leave a voice message, which is saved as an MP3 file. The teacher can then listen to the voice messages online through Google Voice. The Google Voice number is associated with an existing phone number. Be sure to change the settings of the Google number so that the calls are only forwarded to the email and not the existing phone. Students never see the teacher's real phone number because they call the Google Voice number. This is a great tool for homework assignments! Possible prompts for students include: inviting a friend to a party, describing plans for the weekend, describing characteristics in a good friend, etc.

3. Glogster

<http://edu.glogster.com/>

Students create online multimedia posters called glogs. Images, text, videos, and voice recordings can all be inserted into the glog. Glogs should be shared with classmates who can complete an exit ticket with a few sentences about what they learned about the topic or technology. Topics can be more personal such as all about me, my family, and what I like about my school. Other topics can be more researched based such as countries, famous individuals, holidays, and historical events. One negative about Glogster is that it can be difficult to enter accent marks in text. It is best to copy and paste accent marks from Word or another program. Glogster is free but Glogster EDU costs \$10-40/year. Glogster EDU allows teachers to create classes and assignments and monitor student projects at all stages. It also gives students access to their peers' completed projects. Other benefits to Glogster EDU include individual username and passwords for each student and increased privacy for student projects. Glogs are embeddable to most sites.



4. VoiceThread

<https://voicethread.com/>

Students can add sound and text to images on VoiceThread. The teacher can post an image, such as the bustling city of Buenos Aires, and students record themselves describing the picture. Students can listen to other students' descriptions as well. Students could also create a short story using VoiceThread. Students upload images, record or write the script, and share with the class. Possible topics for short stories include: an important person in a student's life, a famous individual relevant to the culture being studied, a landmark event in the student's life, a story about overcoming obstacles, etc. Before creating the story on VoiceThread, it is helpful for students to complete a storyboard with the characters, setting, script, etc. Free accounts have limited functions, but K-12 VoiceThread starts at \$79/year with additional functions ideal for teachers. Educational account allows teachers to set up class, view projects, and ensure privacy for student projects.

5. Wordle

<http://www.wordle.net/>

Students and teachers can create fun and colorful word clouds using Wordle. The more frequently a word appears in the textbox, the larger it is shown in the word cloud. Wordles can be printed or saved in a public gallery. Do NOT save Wordles that contain personal information. The possible activities with Wordle are endless! Here are a few:



5.1. All About Me

Each student creates a Wordle using adjectives and nouns that describe himself/herself. If students do not write their name in the Wordle, when the Wordle is shared with the class the students can guess who made it. Another variation is for students to share their creations in partners or small groups. Students explain and expand upon the Wordle. For example a student could say, "I included 'funny' because I tell a lot of jokes. I included 'athletic' because I play soccer and basketball."

5.2. Student Polls

The teacher asks students their favorite color. As students respond, the teacher types the color into the Wordle. Project the Wordle as it is being typed and created. Then ask students about the Wordle for example, "What is the most commonly like color?" Other topics include birthday month, favorite animal, favorite food, hardest word to spell, etc.

5.3. Guess the Topic/Book

The teacher creates a Wordle with common words about a certain topic or a passage from a book. Students then predict what topic they will be studying or the title or main idea of a book they will be reading. After reading the book, students can look at the Wordle again to review key vocabulary to then be used to rewrite the ending or write their own story.

5.4. Writing Prompt

The teacher creates a Wordle with key vocabulary, a poem, passage from a story, etc. Students look at the Wordle for a minute. Then these words become their inspiration as students write for two to three minutes non-stop. For more novice speakers, their goal can be to write as many sentences as possible within one to two minutes.

5.5. Word Wall

Create a fun word wall with Wordles!

5.6. Class Rules/Expectations

Make a unique display for class rules and expectations.

6. Discussion boards

If you have your own website, post a writing prompt every Monday. Throughout the week, students respond to the prompt and comment on their peers' responses. Comics are great writing prompts! The goal of discussion boards is for students to communicate in writing and feel more comfortable and confident writing spontaneously. Typically language structure is not emphasized as much as developing and expressing more complex ideas.



7. Feliz Miáucoles

Every Wednesday is “Feliz miáucoles!” As a warm-up to class, a LOLGato is presented to students. LOLGato are pictures or videos of cats with funny captions. Often the captions include abbreviations or are grammatically incorrect. You can make your own or google “LOLGato” and you will find a ton! Depending on the LOLGato, students may have to determine the meaning, correct the language structure, or use it to spark conversation and relate it to students’ lives. And sometimes it’s just a good laugh! Zachary-jones.com/zambombazo also posts LOLGatos with suggested follow-up exercises.



8. Video Viernes – Silent Films & Commercials

As a warm-up, show a video for Video Viernes! Short films, silent videos, and commercials are ideal as they are short video clips and can spur various activities. Pixar has a lot of funny and interesting short films on YouTube. Some of my favorite videos are: Pixar: Partly Cloudy, Pixar: For the Birds/Birds on a Wire, Pepsi commercial: looking at numbers backwards 12939, and the Magistral Snowman Ad. There are also some great music videos such as “Stand by Me” by Prince Royce.

8.1. Comprehension questions

Ask comprehension questions that elicit studied vocabulary or language structures. This can be done orally or in writing.

8.2. Writing or speaking prompts

Students can summarize the sequence of events in the video clip emphasizing the use of transitional words and words of sequence. Students could also rewrite the ending.

8.3. Write the dialogue

Play a commercial, but mute the sound. Then give students a paper with a few important images from the video. Students should fill in the dialogue of the commercial and share with the class. Then, see if their predictions are accurate by playing the commercial with sound.

9. Webquest: Shopping!

Students complete a “shopping” webquest. Students are given a budget and objective such as, purchase a vacation home for you and your family or purchase a winter outfit for everyday wear. Students can complete a pre-shopping questionnaire to help guide their search. The questionnaire could include questions such as: How many people are in your family? Do you prefer a beach or mountain vacation home? What articles of clothing do you wear in the winter? Do you like accessories like hats and scarves? Students then search the websites provided by the teacher to find and “purchase” the necessary items (These websites should be in the target language and ideally from a country where the language is spoken). Students record their purchase and cost on the questionnaire. After shopping, students can complete post-exercises such as comparing prices and styles in other countries versus the United States.

10. Design a Vacation!

Students work in small groups to plan a vacation to Spain for the winter or spring vacation. Students can be given a budget or have unlimited funds to make the project less complicated. Each person in the group can research a different topic such as: city information (transportation, weather), lodging, food, transportation, cultural attractions, and outdoor or other fun activities. Once each student has researched their topic, the information is shared with the other group members. As a group, students make the final decisions on each aspect of the trip. Finally, each student creates a travel brochure with text and pictures that explain the vacation.